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TWO TAPESTRIES WOVEN BY WILHELM DE PANNEMAKER

THE two magnificent tapestries, lent by Mr. George Blumenthal (Room F. 8) were made at Brussels, from Italian designs, presumably in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. In 1528 the tapestry manufacturers of Brussels were required thereafter to weave into the border of each piece of greater area than six ells a red shield supported by two Bs. By an edict of Charles V in 1544, each *tapissier* throughout the Low Countries who manufactured, or caused a tapestry to be made, was compelled to weave into the border his own personal mark—generally a monogram—as well as such devices as his town might order. The addition of this personal mark may have been customary at Brussels before this edict, but it is impossible to say with certainty.

Mr. Blumenthal's tapestries show the shield with the supporting letters B of Brussels, and the monogram of the merchant weaver Wilhelm de Pannemaker, one of the few weaver's marks which have been identified.

Wilhelm de Pannemaker, among other works, executed the famous set of twelve pieces, now in the Royal collection in Madrid, of the Conquest of Tunis from designs by Jan Vermay, or Vermeyer, who accompanied Charles V in his campaign. The weaving of the tapestries was carried out regardless of expense, in gold, silver, silk, and fine wools. The contract still exists in which Pannemaker undertakes to use the finest silk of Granada and the finest thread

of Lyons, with gold and silver thread supplied by the client. Mr. Blumenthal's tapestries are woven with the same rich materials, and may have been preceded by a contract similar to the one just mentioned.

These two tapestries came from a collection in Madrid, where they formed part of a set of several pieces illustrating a fable of Mercury. The subject is probably to be identified with Ovid's story of Mercury, Herse, and Aglauros (*Metamorphoses*, Bk. II, x) in which Aglauros is turned to stone because she attempted, driven by jealousy and greed, to prevent Mercury from entering the home of her sister Herse with whom the god was in love. The smaller of the two tapestries, if this identification of the subject is correct, represents Mercury in the chamber of Herse, and the larger, Mercury turning Aglauros into stone, and his subsequent departure. In the gracefully designed borders of the tapestries are represented Justice, Charity, Faith, Mercy, Fortitude and other symbolic figures.

In the composition, in the drawing of the figures and in the charm of the coloring—soft greens and dull reds and blues, brightened with the sheen of lavishly used gold and silver—and finally in qualities of decoration, the two tapestries are distinguished by high artistic merit. Coöperation between Italian artists and Flemish weavers was not uncommon in the sixteenth century, and the cartoons for these two tapestries were evidently done by an Italian artist, probably of the Florentine School.

J. B.